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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mrs. TAUSCHER).

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
March 25, 2009.

I hereby appoint the Honorable ELLEN O. TAUSCHER to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

PRAYER

Rev. Earl F. Palmer, National Presbyterian Church, Washington, D.C., offered the following prayer:

O God, Our Father, we begin this day with gratitude and resolve. We give thanks for those who are privileged to serve in this place of study, deliberation, decisions and history. We are grateful for our Republic of citizens, young and old, their cities and States, farms and villages—a people who by their work and dreams give motivation and energy to what happens here in this House of Representatives.

As we begin this day, we claim, O God, Your gift of truth and grace: for truth that bears the imprint of integrity and honesty and for Your grace that forgives us when harm happens and healing is needed to keep us whole.

We ask for the wisdom, courage and respect that build friendships among these leaders who guide our land. Grant us the hope that encourages through morning, afternoon, and evening hours because of Your love and faithfulness. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the

last day's proceedings and announces to the House her approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from California (Mr. COSTA) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. COSTA led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

WELCOMING REV. EARL F. PALMER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. THORNBERRY) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Madam Speaker, our guest chaplain today represents a convergence of two Washingtons. Rev. Earl Palmer is from Washington State and recently retired as the senior pastor at University Presbyterian Church in Seattle. Currently, he is the Preaching Pastor in Residence at the National Presbyterian Church here in Washington, D.C., as he also preaches around the country under the nonprofit Earl Palmer Ministries organization.

With degrees from UC-Berkeley and Princeton Theological Seminary, he is the author of 18 books. Rev. Palmer is also one of the leading scholars on the life and works of C.S. Lewis.

Citizens from both Washingtons and many others in the country and in between have benefited from the work of this remarkable man. His love of the Gospel and his enthusiasm for sharing the Gospel are evident in all of his preachings and teachings, as is his basic human kindness.

Shirley, Earl's wife of 50 years, has a Ph.D. from the University of Washington. They have three children and seven grandchildren, some of whom are with us today.

Many lives have been blessed by the life and ministry of Earl Palmer, and it is my honor to help welcome him here today to the House of Representatives.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain up to 15 further requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

DROUGHT IN CALIFORNIA

(Mr. COSTA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. COSTA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to call for immediate response and Federal action to assist California in the drought crisis that we're facing today. Clearly, the entire Nation is feeling a financial meltdown with home foreclosures and many other challenges we face, but in California, beyond that, we have a drought that also involves a dairy meltdown.

We have reservoirs that are low, Federal allocations that are set at zero in the San Joaquin Valley, which I represent, along with many of my colleagues, 20 percent for State water deliveries. As a result, we could lose as many as 80,000 jobs. The economic impact could be as much as \$2.2 billion in the San Joaquin Valley that we represent.

Small communities have been crippled. Communities that I represent like Mendota and Firebaugh have 36 to 40 percent unemployment. Delano, with over 50,000 people, has over 34 percent unemployment.

Naming a drought task force is helpful but it is not enough. Plain and simple, we don't need words, we need

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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